

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

PROJECT TITLE: BROADBAND MAPPING

PROPOSAL DUE DATE: Proposals received after **5:00 p.m., Central Daylight Time (CDT) on Wednesday, August 5, 2009**, will not be accepted or considered.

E-MAILED AND FAXED PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED OR CONSIDERED.

TIME PERIOD FOR CONTRACT: A contract entered into with a successful Vendor will be for a three year period.

CONSULTANT ELIGIBILITY: This procurement is open to consultants that satisfy the minimum qualifications stated herein and that are available to do work in the State of Mississippi, USA.

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**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
MISSISSIPPI BROADBAND TASK FORCE**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
BROADBAND MAPPING & ADOPTION**

I. PURPOSE

The Office of the Governor of the State of Mississippi (hereinafter referred to as “the State”) solicits proposals from qualified Vendors interested in providing broadband mapping/deployment/adoption consulting and services for the Mississippi Broadband Task Force (hereinafter referred to as “MBTF”), including all necessary support services (see “Deliverables”). This RFP is issued in accordance with the requirements of § 57-75-9, Code of Mississippi 1972. This RFP is not an offer to contract but seeks the submission of proposals from interested professional service providers that may form the basis for negotiation of a professional service contract. Specific terms and requirements in this RFP may be waived or modified by the State as it deems necessary or appropriate. The State has no liability for any costs incurred by a prospective provider for the preparation and production of a proposal or for any work performed prior to the issuance of a contract.

This initiative is not intended to provide government assistance or subsidies for broadband deployment, but rather will focus on conducting research/mapping to provide a comprehensive picture of current infrastructure deployment and availability in the State, working with providers to encourage build-out in areas lacking accessibility, and engaging local community teams to analyze current use of broadband and educate on opportunities.

The State reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to solicit additional proposals if that is determined to be in the best interests of the State of Mississippi.

II. DEFINITIONS

“MBTF” shall mean the Mississippi Broadband Task Force.

“Acceptable Alternative” shall mean a Vendor-proposed option that the State considers satisfactory in meeting a requirement. The State, at its sole discretion, will determine if the proposed alternative meets the intent of the original requirement.

“ARPU” shall mean Average Revenue Per User as defined by the NTIA’s State Broadband Data and Development Grant Program Notice of Funds Available.

“Available” shall mean that a broadband service provider does, or could, within a typical service interval (7 to 10 business days) without an extraordinary commitment of resources, provision broadband as defined here.

“Broadband” shall mean data transmission technology that provides two-way data transmission to and from the Internet with advertised speeds of at least 768 kilobits per second (kbps) downstream and at least 200 kbps upstream to end users, or providing sufficient capacity in a middle mile project to support the provision of broadband service to end users within the project area.

“Community Anchor Institution” shall mean schools, libraries, medical and healthcare providers, public safety entities, community colleges and other institutions of higher learning, and other community support organizations and entities.

“Contract” shall mean the RFP, the Response, Contract document, all schedules and exhibits, all statements of work and all amendments awarded pursuant to this RFP.

“Consultant” shall refer to the successful Vendor, who will serve as an advisor to the Governor and MBTF Advisory Board. The Office of the Governor shall have final say on all aspects of the Initiative.

“Match” shall mean cash or in-kind contributions of 20% of the total cost of the project as required by the NTIA. Federal funds may not be used as matching funds except as provided by federal statute. In-kind contributions, including third party in-kind contributions, are non-cash donations to a project that may count toward satisfying the non-federal matching requirement of a project’s total budget. In-kind contributions must be allowable project expenses.

“NTIA” shall mean the National Telecommunications and Information Administration at the U.S. Department of Commerce.

“Recovery Act” shall mean the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, Public Law 111-5.

“Rural Area” shall mean an area not located within a city, town, or incorporated area that has a population greater than 20,000 inhabitants, or an urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to a city or town that has a population greater than 50,000 inhabitants.

“Response” shall mean the written proposal submitted by Vendor to the State in accordance with this RFP. The Response shall include all written material submitted by Vendor as of the date set forth in the RFP schedule or as further requested by the State.

“RFP” shall mean Request for Proposal.

“The State” shall mean the State of Mississippi.

“Underserved” shall mean an area composed of one or more contiguous census blocks in which no more than 50% of households in the service area have access to facilities-based terrestrial broadband

service; or no fixed or mobile broadband service provider advertises broadband transmission speeds of at least three megabits per second (mbps) downstream in an area; or the rate of broadband subscribership for the area is 40% of households or less.

“Unserved” shall mean an area composed of one or more contiguous census blocks where at least 90% of households in the service area lack access to facilities-based terrestrial broadband service, either fixed or mobile, at the minimum transmission speed of 768 kilobits per second (kbps) downstream and at least 200 kbps upstream to end users.

“Vendor” shall mean a company, organization or entity submitting a Response to this RFP.

III. RECOVERY ACT QUALIFICATIONS

This project will ultimately be funded by the Recovery Act and as such the parameters of the mapping project will reflect the requirements of the Act. The Consultant selected will be incorporated into the State’s submission to the NTIA for funds to complete the mapping project. In accordance with the United States Department of Commerce Notice of Funds Availability, released July 2009:

Broadband Mapping projects must propose:

- The collection of comprehensive and verifiable broadband data meeting the Program standards that will be accessible and clearly presented to NTIA, the public, and state and local governments without unduly compromising data or the protection of confidential information;
- A workable and sustainable framework for repeated updating of data;
- A plan for collaboration with state-level agencies, local authorities, and other constituencies, as well as a proposal for planning projects designed to identify and address broadband challenges in the state;
- Feasible projects as demonstrated by a reasonable and cost-efficient budget, and a showing of applicant capacity, knowledge, and experience; and
- A timeline for expedient delivery of data with a preference for initial delivery by November 1, 2009.

IV. DELIVERABLES

In order to develop a statewide comprehensive assessment of current broadband deployment and adoption, and to develop plans to enhance future deployment and adoption in Mississippi, particularly in rural areas of the State, the Governor’s MBTF has the need to retain a qualified specialist to provide ongoing assessment, consulting and support services. The data obtained as a result from the award and subject to the deliverables outlined below will be owned by the State of Mississippi.

The State requires respondents to describe their approach to the following categories of work and describe the resources and capabilities they would employ to accomplish each. A successful respondent will have provided a detailed Work Plan that demonstrates the Vendor’s ability to provide the following required deliverables in a timely and cost-efficient manner, including, but not limited to:

Partnership Development/Stakeholder Management

- Facilitate a public/private partnership of appropriate stakeholders that will provide an environment for collaboration to support the mission of expanding broadband coverage across Mississippi.
- Engage a broad set of interest group stakeholders.
- Negotiate a confidential, non-disclosure agreement with providers.

Mapping/Research/Benchmarking

- Gather data at the address level with the following required level of detail: broadband availability, technology, speed, infrastructure, ARPU, and in the case of wireless, the spectrum used.
- Identify through GIS layered mapping the areas of the state classified as Underserved and Unserved as defined in this RFP and by the NTIA.
- Provide GIS layered mapping of current infrastructure, indicating, at a minimum, the transmission speeds and levels and types of service in an electronic form in a data format compatible with both Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc (ESRI) software and Google Earth Visualization Platform.
- Provide data on broadband availability specifically related to Community Anchor Institutions in the state
- Present a plan for the repeated updating of data.
- Describe in detail the methods for verifying the accuracy of the data collected.
- Report on strategy and survey of projects for rural broadband Internet penetration in other states/countries, as well as their positive and negative performance attributes (market intelligence).
- Research/reports will include annual consumer survey reports, annual business survey reports and provider analytics.

Broadband Planning

- Identify barriers to broadband adoption
- Work with the MBTF and local communities to develop strategic technology growth plans in each of Mississippi's eighty-two (82) counties, including, but not limited to, grassroots planning, advocacy, engineering analyses, communications and project management.
- Work with the MBTF to develop a plan for leveraging Community Anchor Institutions to make broadband available to surrounding communities.

Marketing and Communications

- Work with the MBTF to make the collected data accessible to the public, government, and research community in an easily understood manner.
- Work with the MBTF to implement a custom marketing and branding strategy for statewide broadband deployment/adoption.
- Provide MBTF with the tools and resources necessary to communicate with Mississippi's residents, businesses and community leaders.

Grant Writing

- Demonstrate proven track record with knowledge of and successful application for public/private grants for broadband deployment efforts. (Give examples of successful grant applications for similar projects.)

Matching and Cost Sharing Requirements

- Provide a plan to assist the state in identifying the required 20% match by leveraging non-federal sources of funds, either through cash or in-kind contributions.

A contract entered into with a successful supplier will be for a three year period.

The quality of service will be subject to review by the State at any time.

The State may award more than one (1) contract; each Vendor who is offered a contract will be identified via this procurement. This does not preclude a Vendor from sub-contracting elements of the deliverables; however, it is required that a Vendor fully disclose sub-contracting plans within the written proposal.

Any contract awarded as a result of this procurement is contingent upon the availability of funding. Proposals should include costs for the proposed work (See Section V).

V. FEES, COSTS, EXPENSES

Proposals must disclose and include any and all fees, costs or expenses to be charged for the services described in the Deliverables, Section IV of this RFP. Failure to provide a complete listing of all fees, costs and expenses to be charged will result in the disqualification of the Vendor submitting the proposal. The State will set payments at specific intervals and evaluate the level of work completed for payment based upon a proposed schedule.

The successful Vendor will be expected to make personnel available at Vendor's expense (including travel, housing and related costs) at such locations as may be designated by the State, for purposes of managing the project, marketing, training, presenting and consultations with State personnel. Travel expenses for MBTF personnel to observe a similar project at the provider's location will be the responsibility of the State.

VI. VENDOR QUALIFICATIONS

Provide a detailed description of the qualifications and capabilities of the Vendor to provide the State with a comprehensive broadband mapping/adoption effort as described in this RFP. The following information should be included:

Vendor Information

- Provide name, address, Internet URL, telephone and fax numbers of Vendor.
- Include name, title and e-mail address of the individual who will serve as MBTF's primary contact for the procurement of this project.
- If the Vendor has any known conflict of interest with any arm of the State or private corporation which will prohibit it from engaging into a contractual relationship with the designated State Administrative Agency, this must be disclosed in the application.

Vendor Experience

- Provide a list of current and past clients with contact information.
- Provide evidence of projects in which Vendor collected data in a proprietary, non-disclosure environment.
- Provide a comprehensive history of Vendor's efforts in securing public/private grants for similar projects.
- Provide a comprehensive history of previous household survey work for purposes of gathering consumer input for use in mapping/adoption efforts.
- Provide a comprehensive history of previous efforts at engaging local communities to overcome barriers to adoption of broadband.

Division Offices

- Where applicable, provide full list of all addresses, leading with the office that would service this project.

Clients

- List top 5 national and/or state clients and any contracts or clients lost or canceled over the past two years.

Fiscal Information

- A copy of the corporation's most recent annual report, including consolidated balance sheets and related statements of income, stockholders' or partners' equity and changes in financial position, for each of the three fiscal years preceding the end of the most recent fiscal year must be provided. The financial information listed above should be compiled, reviewed, and audited by a Certified Public Accountant.
- Respecting policies that prohibit disclosing financial information that is not public or does not comply with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), please provide evidence of the Vendor's ability to accommodate the economic requirements associated with this project. (Please mark "confidential" information; this information will not be disclosed.)

Staff

- Provide brief biographies of key management executives and key staff who will be working on this project.
- Include appropriate forms/agreements/pledges that staff assigned to this project will complete to ensure that proprietary information from providers will be protected.

- Individually identify any subcontractors and provide separate references for each identified.

VII. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

The State will not reimburse Vendors for any costs associated with preparing or presenting a Response to this RFP.

Vendors must submit proposals as follows:

- One (1) hard-copy original with original signature from Vendor representative
- One (1) electronic copy on CD-ROM in a commonly-available electronic file format, such as Microsoft Office or Adobe PDF

All materials submitted in Response to this solicitation become the property of the State, unless received after the deadline, in which case the Response will be returned to the Vendor. The State has the right to use any of the ideas presented in any material offered. Selection or rejection of a Response does not affect this right.

Any information contained in the Response that is proprietary or confidential must be clearly designated. Marking of the entire Response or entire sections of the Response as proprietary or confidential will neither be accepted nor honored. The State will not accept Responses where pricing is marked proprietary or confidential.

Proposals, whether mailed or hand delivered, must be received in the Office of the Governor, Walter Sillers Building, 550 High Street, 19th Floor, Jackson, MS, 39205, **no later than 5:00 p.m., Central Daylight Time (CDT), on Wednesday, August 5, 2009**, which is 10 working days from date the RFP was published in the newspaper of record. Vendors assume the risk for the method of delivery chosen. The Office of the Governor assumes no responsibility for delays caused by any delivery service. Proposals may not be transmitted by facsimile or electronic transmission.

The Office of the Governor and the MBTF reserve the right to make an award without further discussion of the proposal submitted. Therefore, the proposal should be submitted initially on the most favorable terms which the Vendor can propose. There will be no best and final offer procedure. The Office of the Governor and MBTF also reserve the right to contact a Vendor for clarification of its proposal.

The successful Vendor should be prepared to accept this RFP for incorporation into a contract resulting from this RFP. Grant negotiations may incorporate some or all of the Vendor's proposal. It is understood that the proposal will become a part of the official procurement file on this matter at the State.

The RFP Coordinator is the sole point of contact at the Office of the Governor for this procurement. All communication between the Vendor and the Office of the Government upon release of this RFP shall be with the RFP Coordinator, as follows:

Mississippi Broadband Task Force
Office of the Governor
Attention: Serena Clark, RFP Coordinator
Walter Sillers Building
550 High Street, 19th Floor
(601) 576-2013
sclark@governor.state.ms.us

Any other communication will be considered unofficial and non-binding on the State. Vendors are to rely only on written statements issued by the Office of the Governor. If it is determined that any professional services contract resulting from this RFP is subject to review by the Contract Review Board, Vendor must comply with all statutory requirements; and be available for appearance before the Contract Review Board, at Vendor's expense, if the State deems appropriate.

VIII. SELECTION

Proposals will be evaluated upon the contents of the proposal, information received from other sources and public knowledge. During the evaluation process, some respondents may be required to make oral presentations. Upon review and evaluation of all proposals, the MBTF will make a Vendor recommendation to the Governor, who will select the Vendor determined to best meet the needs of the State. Upon selection of the preferred professional service provider, the State may initiate negotiations for contract terms and conditions, including fees. All proposals received in Response to this RFP may be rejected and the State may solicit additional proposals.

Selection will be based upon the following criteria:

Understanding of contract requirements

- Completeness of Response to RFP
- Detailed Response to each task, including timeframes, Deliverables (as defined in Section III of this RFP) and costs

Vendor's range of services available

- Demonstrated capability to perform the full spectrum of activities from defining project objectives/parameters to executing project Deliverables (as defined in Section IV of this RFP)
- Demonstrated expertise across multiple disciplines, including research, mapping, technology growth strategic planning, public/private partnerships, non-disclosure agreements, community team building, grant writing and outcomes measurement
- Ability to adapt Vendor's processes and/or proprietary tools to address the State's specific needs
- Provide a plan to assist the state in identifying the required 20% match by leveraging non-federal sources of funds, either through cash or in-kind contributions.

Timeliness of Project

- Demonstrated ability to begin the project and begin reporting data to the state in an expeditious manner
- Demonstrated ability to provide a substantially complete set of data, as defined in the Technical Appendix of the NTIA's State Broadband Data and Development Grant Program Notice of Funds Availability., on or before November 1, 2009. Vendor should be able to provide a complete set of all broadband mapping data on or before February 1, 2010 and to complete such data collection by March 1, 2010.

Administrative, management and staffing

- Ability to coordinate with Director of MBTF and project staff
- Capability of providing the adequate number and quality of staff members to accomplish tasks in a timely and quality manner
- Demonstrated ability to perform all Federal and State statutory compliance and reporting requirements relevant to this project
- Explanation of whether/how additional Vendors would support project work

Vendor's qualifications, experience, and references

- Ability to engage a broad set of interest group stakeholders
- Demonstrated industry knowledge
- Ability to provide satisfactory references from similar clients for similar work
- Ability to provide satisfactory list of qualifications and professional experience for key staff assigned to this project
- Capability and willingness to provide company financial statements, as requested
- Demonstrated financial stability of Vendor

Budget

- Cost for each Deliverable in this RFP
- Provide a plan to assist the state in identifying the required 20% match by leveraging non-federal sources of funds, either through cash or in-kind contributions

IX. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT WITH THE STATE

The professional service provider selected to provide the services specified in this RFP must enter into a written contractual agreement with the State. The terms and conditions of such an agreement will be subject to review and approval by legal counsel for the State.

X. STANDARD FORM CONTRACTS

Should a professional service provider desire to utilize a standard form contract in the provision of the services specified herein, it should include the standard form contract with its proposal. If any term or condition of its standard form contract is non-negotiable, such term or condition should be clearly identified. Non-negotiable terms or conditions determined to be unacceptable to the State may result in the disqualification of the professional service provider submitting the proposal.

XI. QUALIFICATION TO DO BUSINESS IN MISSISSIPPI

Should a foreign corporation be selected to provide professional services in accordance with this RFP, it must be qualified to transact business in the State of Mississippi in accordance with § 79-11-397, et seq., Code of Mississippi (1972), and possess a Certificate of Authority issued by the Secretary of State at the time a professional services contract is executed. For the entire term that the contract is in effect, the selected provider must continuously be in good standing with the State of Mississippi and with any political subdivisions thereof which have jurisdiction over the provider's operations.

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Mississippi Broadband Task Force

By: /s/Serena R. Clark

Date: July 15, 2009